

MK1 [REDACTED]

Below is a summary of interview of MK1 [REDACTED], USCG, conducted by the AIM informal board on August 22, 2006 concerning the diving incident which resulted in two deaths on August 17, 2006. AIM board members present at the interview were Captain [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], and LCDR [REDACTED].

MK1 [REDACTED] has been aboard HEALY for [REDACTED]. He stated that he reported aboard on [REDACTED], following a tour at Station Boston. He is currently the [REDACTED], and is planning to go to school on 9 October for further training in that engineering field. He is currently a qualified Technician of the Watch (TOW) and a break-in Engineer of the Watch (EOW).

MK1 [REDACTED] has never seen a dive operation aboard a Coast Guard ship, but he did dive as a child. He said that on the night prior to August 17th, he had the mid watch, and slept most of the morning on the 17th. He did go to quarters, but said that there was no announcement of ice liberty at quarters, but he heard rumors that the CO was looking for a good spot.

Later, he was glad to hear that the rumor was true, and that ice liberty would be granted. He never had any official word, but finally heard it piped on the IMC. He said he spent the early portion of his ice liberty walking and talking. He drank two Coronas early on, and a third beer a short while later.

He said he saw the dive team preparing for a dive, so he decided to wander over to see what was going. He saw LTJG [REDACTED] helping BM2 DUQUE with his gloves and he began to help as well. MK1 [REDACTED] remembers BM2 DUQUE taking his gloves off and going back to the ship to obtain new gloves. Upon BM2 DUQUE's return, MK1 [REDACTED] assisted LTJG [REDACTED] with putting the gloves on BM2 DUQUE.

Next MK1 [REDACTED] helped situate BM2 DUQUE on the ice next to LT Hill. At that point MK1 [REDACTED] noted that ENS [REDACTED] was with ENS [REDACTED] – another diver. As the divers were getting ready, the tenders and divers noticed that BM2 DUQUE had his AGA dive mask straps under his dry suit hood, while the two other divers (LT HILL and ENS [REDACTED]) had theirs' rigged in opposite fashion – with the straps on top of the hood. ENS [REDACTED] and LT HILL switched their hoods after deciding that BM2 had done it correctly and they had not.

After the divers were properly outfitted, MK1 [REDACTED] helped hook up the tending lines. Finally, all three divers (ENS [REDACTED], LT HILL and BM2) were hooked up to lines. The larger spools were hooked up to ENS [REDACTED] and BM2 DUQUE, and the smaller detached spool was attached to LT HILL. As they were making final adjustments, several people came over to talk and take pictures.

All three divers entered the water, and began making equipment checks. Shortly after entering, ENS [REDACTED] asked to be pulled back out, as her equipment was not

functioning properly. She was getting wet and cold inside her dry suit and said that she suspected that a valve was malfunctioning. Neither she nor the tenders could tell if it was a valve or if its neck seal was too loose. ENS ██████ talked to LT HILL and then departed the area to look for another suit with ENS ██████

LT HILL and BM2 DUQUE remained in the water. A short time later they decided to try to push themselves under water to see if they were too buoyant. Both divers said that they were, and returned to the dive side for more weight. At this time BM2 DUQUE complained about his hands being extremely cold. Upon inspection, BM2 DUQUE's inner gloves were not wet but his hands were cold. MK1 ██████ and another crewmember helped to keep BM2 DUQUE's hands warm by placing them under their armpits. Since his gloves were not wet, BM2 DUQUE put them back on.

MK1 ██████ remembers BM2 DUQUE asking for 10 more pounds. LTJG ██████ placed what MK1 ██████ thought was 10 pounds worth of weight in BM2's weight pockets, but MK1 could not tell for certain. LT HILL got more weights as well, though he is not sure how much. There was some confusion as to the size and weight of the available weights, because unlike ones he had seen before these were not standard "belt weights," but bags of lead.

After a short time, both divers put their masks back on and got back in the water. This time they swam about 10 or 15 feet from the edge of the ice. They did some more checks, then LT HILL stuck up two fingers and the two divers submerged. The two divers were in sight for a while but then appeared to swim away from the tenders toward the opposite ice edge. MK1 ██████ said he lost sight of them.

For a while the line tenders fed out some line, hand over hand, and it felt normal. MK1 ██████ noticed the spool that LT Hill's line was attached to began bouncing on the ground. MK1 ██████ said he grabbed the spool that LT HILL was connected to, while DC3 ██████ continued to pay out the line. At this point, the line still seemed to be tending at an angle. As even more line sped out, LTJG ██████ got concerned and asked for help. MK1 ██████ said that he moved in front of LTJG ██████ on the line holding BM2. At this point they struggled to get the line stopped, and finally did. They gave pulls on the line, but to no response. ENS ██████ returned to the dive side around this time and ordered four pulls on the line. They did, to no response. MK1 ██████ said there was only about 20 or 30 feet of line left on the reel, so he knew something must be wrong. BMCS ██████ arrived on scene and instructed the tenders to pull the divers up. They began to pull the divers up, but MK1 ██████ said his hands eventually became extremely numb and he was unable to continue. Others took over pulling and MK1 ██████ leaned over the edge to watch for the divers.

MK1 ██████ said that the lines were crossed in the water for a while, but eventually shifted back to their proper sides. The lines were tending straight down vertically in the water. He said he first saw LT HILL, then BM2 DUQUE rising up through the water. Their bodies appeared limp as they were pulled to the surface. MK1

██████████ then yelled for blankets and began aiding with the attempted revival of the divers.

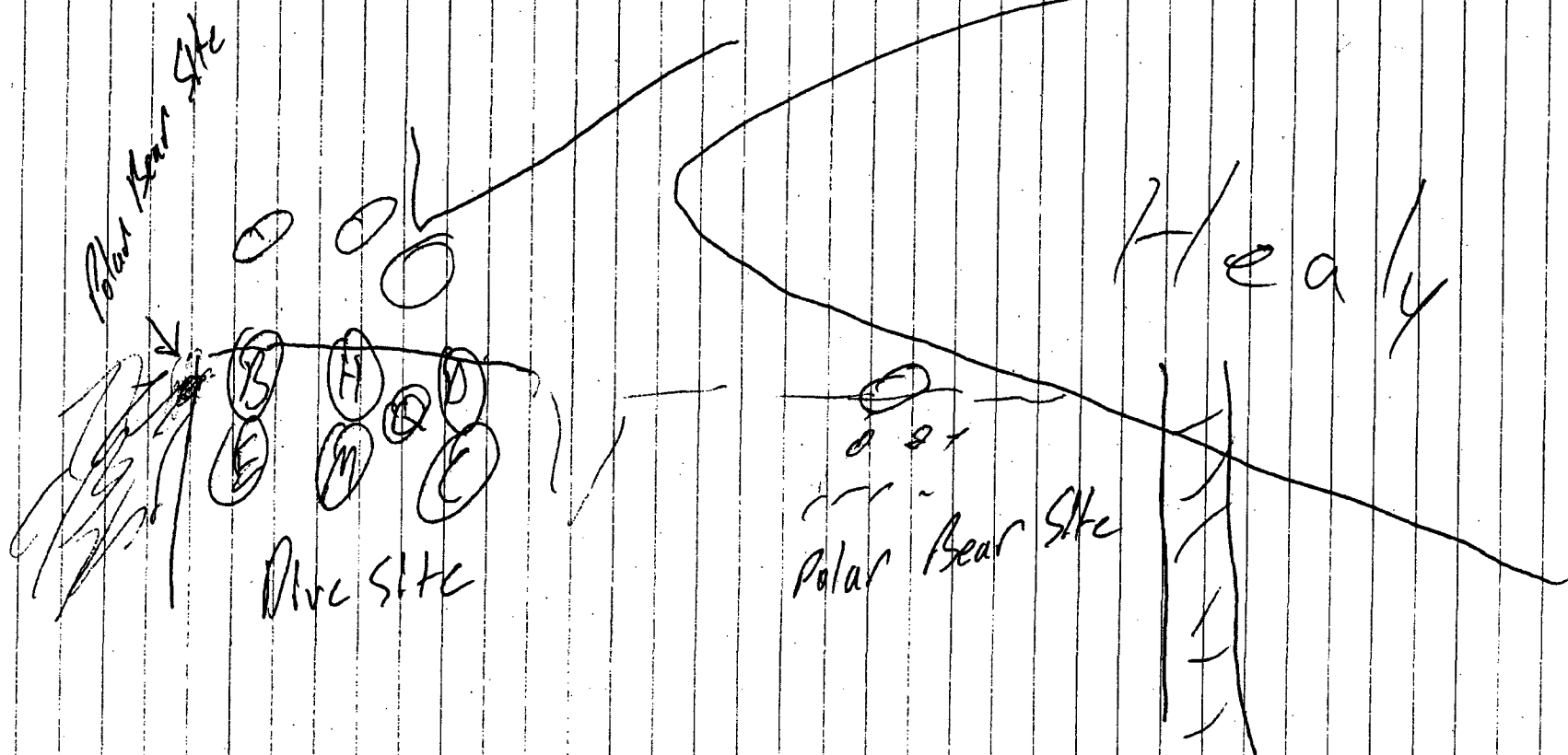
Once the divers were pulled out of the water crewmembers began removing their dive equipment and started first aid. ENS ██████████ started looking over the equipment, and looked at BM2 DUQUE's depth gauge. ENS ██████████ yelled "it's maxed out."

In response to questions, MK1 ██████████ stated the following. The first time he heard of a dive operation was during ice liberty. MK1 ██████████ did not notice if there was a radio at the dive side or if there was pre-staged first aid equipment at the dive side. He had no tender qualification or experience – this was the first time he had acted as a tender. He does not remember specifically going over the dive pull signals and he said he thought the dive pull signals were: one pull for pay out more line, two pulls for stop, and four pulls for danger. He did not know who was in charge, but suspects that LTJG "Doc" ██████████ was. MK1 has stretcher bearer training. He never saw a check off list at the dive side. He was not part of a safety or ORM brief.

MK1 ██████████ drew a picture of the ice liberty and dive side – signed and dated it August 22, 2006. The majority of the "polar bear" dive activity occurred next to the brow of HEALY, about 30 feet from the dive side. MK1 ██████████ depicted where each of the divers initially went into the water and labeled the location of the divers and dive tenders in relation to HEALY. His recollection was that one person took a polar bear dive next to the dive side. He labeled the diagram with the positions of both sets of polar bear activity.

MK1 ██████████

B - Mr. [REDACTED] H - Mr. HIX D - SM2 Pague
 E - Mr. [REDACTED] M - DC3 [REDACTED] C - Doc [REDACTED]
 Q - MK1 [REDACTED]



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MK1 [REDACTED]

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